

PHOBOS

NYHETSBLAD FOR ARES - KUN FOR MEDLEMMER

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REDAKSJONELT

Endelig kan vi gratulere hverandre med et vel overstått Arcon, nok en gang med en dunderende deltagerrekord. På tross av denne overveldende oppslutningen gikk kongressen forbløffende bra, noe vi ene og alene kan takke våre altoppofrende medlemmer for. Årets kongress, som var...

- Unnskyld, men dette nummeret skal ut før Arcon.

- Nei, du skriver på redaksjonelt-spalten til det nummeret som skal ut før Arcon. Jeg holder på med neste nummer...

- Nei, det var du som skulle skrive redaksjonelt til dette nummeret. Jeg holder på med noe helt annet.

- Å f..., men tror du noen kommer til å lese dette nummeret da? Alle medlemmene er jo på Blindern for å ommøblere eller hjemme hos Johannes for å ordne med de siste detaljene før kongressen. Vi må jo innrømme at den innsatsen som medlemmene våre legger ned før, under og etter Arcon er fantastisk. Det er vel knapt et møbel på hele universitetet som får stå i fred. Den eneste grunnen til at vi kan slippe unna med en så stor ommøblering, er vel at universitetet har innsett at møblene kommer tilbake dit de skulle ha vært etterpå. Hvis Arcon hadde nøydt seg med å sette møblene tilbake der de sto, ville det nok sikkert blitt litt av en huskestue...

- Du har nok rett. Men nå får det være nok, vi må se å komme oss opp på Bjølsen, og sjekke om noen har åpnet lokalet enda.

- Hvis det ikke er noen som har åpnet opp klubbhuset enda, så kan det vel like gjerne være. D et er vel likevel ingen som kommer så sent...

(For betraktninger om været henviser vi denne gang til Ex Cathedra lengre inn i bladet.)

EX CATHEDRA

Det gjenstår bare noen få dager til ARCON 12 når dette leses. Vi håper selvsagt at alle Ares' medlemmer har fått ordnet seg med det de måtte ha behov for av medlemsavgift, påmeldinger etc.

Men om du ikke har rukket de tidligere fristene, fortvil ikke! Det er fortsatt anledning til å få kommet med på det meste -- kanskje med forbehold om turneringer som det nå er helt fullt på. Du må bare melde deg på som medhjelper for oss (minimum 2 puljer + etterpå, helst søndag kveld), så skal vi nok ordne noe. Snakk evt. med undertegnede. Dessverre kan du ikke regne med å treffe meg på Ares ikveld, siden ARCON-forberedelsene tradisjonelt går i ett fra og med mandag i den uken ARCON skal være...

Uansett benytter jeg også anledningen til å ønske dere alle en riktig velsignet sommer; min filosofering angående det pene været i siste PHOBOS, later ikke til å ha medført riktighet. Tvert imot har sommerværet vart tvers gjennom en St.Hanshelg som faktisk ble langt bedre enn meteorologenes spådommer. Hvis vi nå bare får beholde sommeren frem til over ARCON, skal jeg ikke klage om så hele juli regner vekk. Da skal jeg jo likevel bare jobbe...

Johannes H. Berg

The Diplomacy Survival Guide

Vincent Mous

So you've played Diplomacy for a while, and have done moderately well, winning some games, drawing more, and losing even more, and you ask yourself, what do I have to do to take my play to the next level? Well, the answer my friends, is in this column. Simply read it, and heed my advice! This is good stuff! Trust me...I wouldn't lie to you just to win a few more games, now *would* I?

Well, as an initial installment of the Diplomacy Survival Guide, I thought I would give you the Ten Rules for Surviving at Diplomacy. Well, ok, maybe not *the* Ten Rules, but the *first* ten. Oh, and before someone sues me for false representation, these are the ten rules for *surviving*. I never said anything about winning, right?

1. Paranoia is a good thing.

Do you ever get that creepy feeling when playing Diplomacy that everyone else is out to get you? Do you ever suffer from delusions and irrational fears? Well, relax. Those fears are perfectly rational -- everyone is out to get you.

2. Too much of a good thing is bad.

Although a healthy dose of paranoia is good for you, you have to learn to put it aside somewhat. After all, maybe you can get some of the others before they get you, right? Maybe you can be friends with someone and beat up on the others, then finish your friend off before he gets you? Then again, maybe not. The point is if you *don't* trust *one* of the six other scheming bastards (yes, you are one too), then you won't get anywhere.

3. Security in numbers...or, let's all beat up on Russia!

If you organize an alliance which will take on another country, then there are a few advantages that will follow. First, while you're all attacking that other country, you're not getting attacked yourself. Second, you are in reduced danger of a stab, since if one of the countries in an alliance stabs another, then there is a greater chance of the other members in the alliance coming to the rescue. This is because that makes people feel good, and even though we're all backstabbers, we don't like to admit it. Third, you have more friends that won't be *expecting* you to stab, because of my second point, so if you stab, it'll be a real surprise. Finally, you get to grow and have more units, thus the security in numbers (you didn't think I meant the number of countries in your alliance, did you?).

4. Talk to everyone.

Ask them about the weather, their national football team, whether they've ever tried lasagna and would like to meet in this nice little restaurant in Rome that you know to try it out (especially if you're Austria talking to France). Even if you're not going to ally with someone right away, it's always a good thing to keep the channels of communication open. That way you can get an early warning of a stab from someone else, or, even better, spread disinformation when you're about to stab someone! It's also easier to start working with someone late in a game if you've talked with them earlier.

5. Don't stop talking.

Even if you've stabbed someone, or if they've stabbed you, don't end the communication. If nothing else, you need to either gloat and rub it in or swear and vent your anger (as the case may be) to get the most out of the game!

More than that, though, if you've been stabbed, you may induce a guilt trip in the stabber and convince him to call off the attack (or see something better which the two of you could attack together). Then you can get your revenge in a few years....

And if *you* stab someone, you may *let* yourself be convinced to recant -- thus letting your victim get even more out of position, and getting the chance to stab that player twice in a row! It may also be worthwhile to let him live as a puppet state for a few turns and use his support against others before finishing him off (remember he'll likely be looking for revenge!).

...It's often usefull to misleed other players about your jeenyus-level IQ. After all, although your brane power may excede that of the other six players cumbined, you do knot want to let them no....

6. Brains are deadly...or, if you're smart, don't show it!

Someone who seems to know a lot, and talks about all sorts of openings and proposes brilliant plans that look 5 years into the future will probably get clobbered immediately by the other players because they'll recognize that he's too dangerous (call it instinct). Therefore, make a few spelling and grammar errors, propose a plan with an obvious mistake, or ask someone what a Lepanto is or what the correct syntax for a convoy is. They will then think you are harmless (or at least sufficiently so), and will have a tendency to ally with you early in the game, since they'll think themselves able to take advantage of you later on.

7. The early worm gets caught -- by the early bird.

When starting a game, don't decide too early on who your allies will be and what your strategy is. Speak to everyone first, getting an idea of who the players are and who the fools are. Then make standard opening moves in the Spring and decide who to attack in the Fall or the Spring of the following year. The worst way to start off a game is to attack someone right off the bat and have someone else attack you.

8. One enemy is good. Three enemies is bad.

If you seem to be friendly and allied with everyone, your neighbours will all start to get suspicious, since they'll be expecting a stab, and it'll be harder for you to work with anyone. You may even provoke one of them to attack you -- which could happen at the same time as you attack someone else, and really spoil your situation. Therefore, try having an enemy at all times; someone weaker and smaller than you, of course!

"There are three types of lies: lies, damn lies and statistics"
- Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, British PM 1868, 1874-1880

9. Brush up on your opening moves and best alliance statistics.

The Hall of Fame will give you a breakdown of which alliances win the most and which countries

are the best. You can also get a list of opening moves and discussions about which win the most often and which are the most effective, etc.

Well, not all alliances are created equal, and they usually tend to favor one side over the other. Here is my view of the best primary ally for each country, as well as the best secondary ally (you shouldn't just have one ally, but at least two, so that you can stab one and still keep the other). I would say more, but that would be another article (Manus, do I hear you calling?).

- ☐ **Austria:** Italy, Russia.
- ☐ **England:** Germany, Turkey
- ☐ **France:** England, Russia
- ☐ **Germany:** Italy, France
- ☐ **Italy:** Turkey, Germany
- ☐ **Russia:** England, Italy
- ☐ **Turkey:** Russia, France

10. **Play England.**

This is the easiest one to follow - Turkey being a good second choice if you can survive the first few years. I've actually never been eliminated in a standard Diplomacy game when playing England. Unfortunately, I've never won either -- but that's not the point, right?

The fact is, England is the most defensive country there is, because it has a natural moat surrounding it. There's not even a drawbridge to be lowered to let the troops in once the castle wall is breached. Unfortunately, this same obstacle also makes it hard for England to get her armies out onto the continent.

And here's a final, bonus tip...

11. **Reaching 18 centers helps.**

You'll definitely survive if you reach 18 centers. I guarantee it! (Standard games only -- yes, there's always a catch.)

Well, I hope this will be of use to you. I really recommend that you change your goal to survival from winning. After, with the likes of Dan Shoham out there, you don't even stand a chance, right? Just let me know which games you'll be playing in!

Oh, and this article is shareware, so you may use it for a period of one month. after which you must register by sending your name, address and five dollars to the author. (Just kidding.)

